

REMARKS

1. Introduction

Applicants filed a response on March 6, 2006. Applicants supplement the response by enclosing a declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 signed by each of the inventors.

2. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103


Claims 22-30, 32-34, 40, and 48-52 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Cragun (US 6,774,920) in view of Hamzy et al. (US 6,711,294). Claims 35-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cragun (US 6,774,920) in view of Hamzy et al. (US 6,711,294) and in view of Kikinis et al. (US 5,522,089).

Applicants state that the Cragun reference is not prior art to the present application. The Cragun reference has an effective filing date of November 1, 2000. Applicants filing date is December 22, 2000. Applicants further provide a declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.131 from each of the inventors. As shown in the enclosed declaration, the invention was conceived (as shown in Exhibits A and B) and reduced to practice (as shown in Exhibit C) prior to November 1, 2000. Therefore, Applicants have established that the claimed subject matter was made prior to the effective date of the Cragun patent. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are allowable over the Cragun reference, either alone or in combination with the Hamzy or Kikinis references.

SUMMARY

Applicant respectfully requests early allowance of this application. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorneys for the Applicant via telephone if such communication would expedite this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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